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Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the intrinsic value of biological diversity and its various contributions to sustainable development and human well-being, and recognizing that wild fauna and flora in their many beautiful and varied forms are an irreplaceable part of the natural systems of the Earth which must be protected for this and the generations to come,

Concerned, therefore, about the increasing scale of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products and its adverse economic, social and environmental impacts,

Expressing serious concern over the steady rise in the level of rhino poaching and the alarmingly high levels of killings of elephants in Africa, which threaten those species with local extinction and, in some cases, with global extinction,

Recognizing that illicit trafficking in wildlife contributes to damage to ecosystems and rural livelihoods, including those based on ecotourism, undermines good governance and the rule of law and, in some cases, threatens national stability and requires enhanced regional cooperation and coordination in response,

Emphasizing that the protection of wildlife must be part of a comprehensive approach to achieving poverty eradication, food security, sustainable development,

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including the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, economic growth, social well-being and sustainable livelihoods,

Reaffirming its call for holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem,

Expressing concern that, in some cases, illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora is an increasingly sophisticated form of transnational organized crime, recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/19 of 26 July 2012, in which the Council recognized that organized crime had diversified and represented a threat to health and safety, security, good governance and the sustainable development of States, and therefore underlining the need to combat such crimes by strengthening international cooperation, capacity-building, criminal justice responses and law enforcement efforts,

Recognizing the legal framework provided by and the important role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,[1] an international agreement that stands at the intersection between trade, the environment and development, promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, should contribute to tangible benefits for local people and ensures that no species entering into international trade is threatened with extinction,

Recognizing also the importance of other multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals,[2] the Convention on Biological Diversity,[3] the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage[4] and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat,[5]

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40 of 25 July 2013 on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora, in which the Council encouraged Member States to make illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora involving organized criminal groups a serious crime,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/36 of 28 July 2011 on crime prevention and criminal justice responses against illicit trafficking in endangered species of wild fauna and flora,

Reaffirming that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime[6] and the United Nations Convention against Corruption[7] constitute effective tools and an important part of the legal framework for international cooperation in fighting illicit trafficking in endangered species of wild flora and fauna,

Recognizing the important work of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, a collaborative effort of the secretariat of the Convention on

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 993, No. 14537.
[2] Ibid., vol. 1651, No. 28395.
[3] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.
[4] Ibid., vol. 1037, No. 15511.
[5] Ibid., vol. 996, No. 14583.
[6] Ibid., vol. 2225, No. 39574.
[7] Ibid., vol. 2349, No. 42146.

International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the International Criminal Police Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization, by, inter alia, providing technical assistance to Member States,

Welcoming resolution 1/3 of 27 June 2014 of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, on illegal trade in wildlife,[8] in which the Environment Assembly called upon the General Assembly to consider the issue of illegal wildlife trade at its sixty-ninth session,

Welcoming also the efforts of and cooperation between Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as activities of United Nations agencies and other entities, aimed at preventing and fighting illicit trafficking in wildlife, and in this regard taking note of the Paris Declaration of 2013, the London Declaration of 2014, the Kasane Statement of 2015 and the Brazzaville Declaration of 2015,

Recalling its resolution 68/205 of 20 December 2013, in which it proclaimed 3 March, the day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, as World Wildlife Day, and welcoming the international observance of the Day in 2014 and 2015 in order to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild fauna and flora,

Taking note of the Doha Declaration on Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice into the Wider United Nations Agenda to Address Social and Economic Challenges and to Promote the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, and Public Participation, adopted by the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Doha from 12 to 19 April 2015,

Taking note also of the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests on the international arrangement on "The forests we want: beyond 2015" and of the resolution on the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015 adopted by the Forum at its eleventh session,

1. *Reaffirms* the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[9] in which were recognized the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife, where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides, and the importance in this regard of effective international cooperation among relevant multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations was emphasized;

2. *Encourages* Member States to adopt effective measures to prevent and counter the serious problem of crimes that have an impact on the environment, such as illicit trafficking in wildlife and wildlife products, including flora and fauna as protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,[1] and poaching;

3. *Urges* Member States to take decisive steps at the national level to prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade in wildlife, on both the supply and

[8] See United Nations Environment Programme, document UNEP/EA.1/10, annex I.

[9] Resolution 66/288, annex.

demand sides, including by strengthening the legislation necessary for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of such illegal trade as well as strengthening enforcement and criminal justice responses, in accordance with national legislation and international law, acknowledging that the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime can provide valuable technical assistance in this regard;

4. *Calls upon* Member States to make illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora involving organized criminal groups a serious crime, in accordance with their national legislation and article 2 (b) of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;[6]

5. *Also calls upon* Member States to review and amend national legislation as necessary and appropriate so that offences connected to the illegal wildlife trade are treated as predicate offences, as defined in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, for the purposes of domestic money-laundering offences, and are actionable under domestic proceeds of crime legislation;

6. *Encourages* Member States to harmonize their judicial, legal and administrative regulations to support the exchange of evidence regarding and criminal prosecution of illicit trafficking in wildlife, as well as to establish national-level inter-agency wildlife crime task forces, consistent with national legislation;

7. *Urges* Member States to engage actively in efforts to raise awareness about and address the problems and risks associated with the supply and transit of and demand for illegal wildlife products and to reduce the demand using targeted strategies in order to influence consumer behaviour;

8. *Strongly encourages* Member States to support, including through bilateral cooperation, the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for communities affected by illicit trafficking in wildlife and its adverse impacts with the full engagement of the communities in and adjacent to wildlife habitats as active partners in conservation and sustainable use, enhancing the rights and capacity of the members of such communities to manage and benefit from wildlife and wilderness;

9. *Urges* Member States that have not yet done so to consider taking measures to ratify or accede to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption,[7] and calls upon States parties to take appropriate measures to ensure the full and effective implementation of their obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and other relevant multilateral agreements, as well as to consider ways to share information with one another on best practices to tackle illicit trafficking in wildlife in line with those instruments;

10. *Calls upon* Member States to prohibit, prevent and counter any form of corruption that facilitates illicit trafficking in wildlife and wildlife products;

11. *Strongly encourages* Member States, in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40, to cooperate at the bilateral, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate international illicit trafficking in wildlife

and wildlife products through, inter alia, the use of international legal instruments such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption;

12. *Encourages* Member States, where relevant and appropriate, to enhance cooperation for the timely and cost-efficient repatriation of live illegally traded wildlife, including eggs, consistent with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

13. *Calls upon* United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates and in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40, to continue to support efforts by Member States to fight illicit trafficking in wildlife, such as through capacity-building and by supporting alternative livelihoods, and to improve cooperation with all relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate a holistic and comprehensive approach by the international community;

14. *Calls upon*, in this regard, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, within its mandate and resources, in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40 and in close cooperation and collaboration with Member States, to continue to collect information on patterns and flows of illicit trafficking in wildlife and to report thereon;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to further improve the coordination of activities undertaken by United Nations offices, funds and programmes relating to the scope of the present resolution, within their respective mandates and in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40;

16. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, taking into account Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40, to report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the global status of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade, and on the implementation of the present resolution, and to make proposals for possible future action, including consideration of the appointment of a special envoy to promote awareness and galvanize international action;

17. *Decides* to revisit the issue and the implementation of the present resolution on an annual basis, beginning at its seventieth session.